

advent of history, in the shape of a horse and a full-skirted dancer—evidence of the arrival of the Spanish Conquistador.

The best days for archeologists—as well as for artists—are the first days, and Dr. A. V. Kidder, the distinguished authority who contributes the introduction, writes with equal nostalgia of the time when as a “cub” archeologist he was digging “right here, in the Tyuonyi ruin” and living in the self-same cave with Baumann’s (and the cliff dwellers’) squirrel. The author’s text omitting all dates, lists, maps and other scientific paraphernalia, lightly relegating the learned to their “stratosphere,” concentrates on presenting the subjective vision of the artist. With the aid of two gifted fellow craftsmen, also of Santa Fe—Willard Clark for typography, and Hazel Dreis for case—and of Writers Editions’, an established self-publishing group, Baumann has produced a very original regional art book, handmade and spicy throughout—recognizably a Baumann, too, though not to hang on your wall.

*Elizabeth Sergeant has spent many years in New Mexico and has done much work among the Indians.*

## Neighbor to the South

**THE MEXICAN EARTH.** By Todd Downing. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1940. 337 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by ERNEST GRUENING

THIS is a meaty and craftsmanlike study of our next-door neighbor. It is crammed with fact, color, interpretation; with history, archeology, folkways; and enriched by anecdote and discerning comment. It is an ambitious, and on the whole successful, attempt to condense Mexico into one volume of moderate length. Mr. Downing obviously knows his Mexico, has observed it affectionately, yet discriminatingly, and writes vividly and entertainingly. He has also read widely and knows some of the earlier chroniclers well. And, this, let it be said for the benefit of the lengthening line of latter-day literary delvers in Mexico, is the place to begin. Only thus, as Mr. Downing appreciates, and makes clear to his readers, is the continuity of the Mexican drama understandable. Thus, this pert and pat diagnosis and definition: (the author has been speaking of Pedro de Alvarado, blond-bearded giant, able and ruthless Cortez captain.)

From beginning to end of his career in America he was the gold seeker. Mexican history falls into periods during which foreigners like him have come to make personal fortunes out of first one and then another of the country’s resources; yellow gold, silver, green gold, black gold. The Mexican Revolution, in the last analysis, is a repudiation of these exploiters — yellow beards, blue eyes, smiles and all—and of the alien institutions which they brought with them.

From here Mr. Downing carries his thread to the contemporary decrees expropriating lands, the Agua Caliente resort properties, the foreign-owned National Railways of Mexico, and on March 18, 1938, the properties of seventeen British and American oil companies.

There is a little new material, based chiefly on the author’s personal experiences. Generally speaking, however, “The Mexican Earth” is a skillful adaptation and rearrangement of the work of previous writers. Mr. Willard’s fine pen and ink drawings admirably supplement the author’s effective capture of the atmosphere of Mexico.

*Ernest Gruening, at present Governor of Alaska, and at one time an editor of The Nation, is the author of “Mexico and Its Heritage,” which is considered one of the authoritative books on its subject. It has been characterized as doing for the United States what Bryce in “The American Commonwealth” did for the United States.*

## Prisoners in Russia

**THE GUILLOTINE AT WORK.** By P. G. Maximoff. Chicago: The Alexander Berkman Fund. 1940. 627 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES MALAMUTH

THE “body” of this book consists of case histories and general descriptive material relating the systematic mistreatment of political prisoners in Russia, with special reference to anarchists. Its “soul” is an anarchist critique of the Soviet State as such, wherein the author attempts to prove that Stalinism is an inevitable outgrowth of Leninism—its natural continuation, and merely Bolshevism in its current expression; and that Bolshevism itself is the natural and logically inevitable fruit of Marxist premises, its doctrine and philosophy, in action.

Inconsistencies are apparent at the outset, when Mr. Malamuth attempts to establish the genetic link between Marxism and Bolshevism. These inconsistencies crop up throughout this voluminous work in the subsequent attempt to identify Stalinism of today with Leninism. Regarding all Marxism as reactionary, the author contends that the Marxists were “victori-

ous” (his quotes) in the Russian Revolution (the victory itself being paradoxical) because of “their temporary renunciation of Marxism, effected in order to achieve their aim of seizing power.” He contends that not only Lenin resorted to this renunciation of Marxism but Marx himself. In both instances the renunciation was in favor of anarchism. The latter is the only truly revolutionary philosophy, according to the author, true Marxism, the Marxism of the Communist Manifesto, being reactionary. What the author does not explain is why the anarchists themselves had never anywhere in the world led a successful revolution, while a Marxist “fraud” like Lenin and Marxist “racketeers” like the Bolsheviks, by applying the principles of anarchism, did.

The “body” of the book however, is well founded in fact. At least, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the documents cited. They form a martyrology that must weigh heavily on the consciences of all men and women, in Russia or outside, who in one way or another supported a regime as cruel and ruthless as the Soviet regime has always been—and especially those among them who today share this anarchist author’s view of Marxism or Bolshevism or both as reactionary in nature. Yet the account of mistreatments chronicled here barely scratches the surface. In the first place, it is confined to anarchists, thus excluding the far more numerous political martyrology of Socialist-Revolutionists, Mensheviks, Trotskyists, and various other political dissidents from monarchists to communists. Stalin’s latest purge alone is believed to have destroyed 300,000 communists through shooting, exile, and imprisonment over the brief period 1935-1938.

The story of anarchist suffering under the Soviet regime thus forms only a very small portion of the total suffering by political dissidents in present-day Russia. If therefore this book tells but a tiny fraction of the whole story, it does have the merit of having set an example. Let others follow with the stories of S-Rs, Mensheviks, communists, and others — and when they do, I hope they will be able to bring their stories closer to our current years, for in this book the bulk of the stories refer to the twenties and early thirties.

**THE CASE OF THE FRIGHTENED FISH**

Murder spawns between the tanks of a great aquarium on ? Bahama cay. "Swift and shuddery."—*Sat Rev. Lit.*

By **WILLIAM DuBOIS**

\$2.00  
LITTLE, BROWN

# THE NEW BOOKS

## Biography

**MEMORIES OF A CHILD OF VASSAR.** By Cornelia M. Raymond. Vassar Coöperative Bookshop. 1940. \$1.25.

Miss Raymond is almost literally a child of Vassar. She was born in 1861, the year that Vassar was founded, and went to Poughkeepsie in the fall of 1865 when her father entered upon his duties as president. She is there today, lovingly and intelligently working among the records of the college, the early minutes of the Trustees, faculty, and students' association. This book is charmingly personal, but carries tucked away among a little girl's memories a number of illuminating observations of the personalities who gave vigor and color to the test years of this educational experiment; Maria Mitchell; her father, President Raymond, of whom a trustee once said "he can dive deeper, swim farther and come out drier than any man I ever knew"; the Hollander, Professor Van Ingen; the art professor who suffered nobly under the Founder's gift of some particularly bad chromos; James Orton, famous for his explorations in Peru; Professor Hinkle, wise and exacting who, strolling through a corridor which housed the sheet-draped casts from the art gallery, was shocked that the young ladies should appear thus outside their bedrooms.

Miss Raymond's book is published in celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Vassar College and in honor of Henry Noble MacCracken, in the twenty-fifth year of his presidency.

R. L.

## Fiction

**BROADSIDES.** By R. W. Daly. Macmillan. 1940. 528 pp. \$2.50.

In 1805, as today, England was faced with a resolute and triumphant foe. He had dominated the continent, taken strategic positions in Africa, and was now ensconced in full force along the Channel all the way down to Spain. But he had no planes and never got past the British squadrons; the issue was settled at Trafalgar. Such is the rousing climax of Mr. Daly's romantic sea-tale. In the background is the long duel between Bonaparte and Britain, in the foreground the career of Captain Edward O'Corboy, and joining them is that dominant element in both: the British Navy. Mr. Daly must indeed have been tempted to make more of old Bonaparte and let him take the stage, but he kept Bony resolutely in the rear with the other supernumeraries, for the stage belongs to O'Corboy himself, who tells the tale.

He was a queer one to be in the navy at all, in those days when no Irishman who took the King's gold dared show his face at home again. But O'Corboy had his private reasons, and a love of the sea to boot. As he tells of his adventures, in a swift, simple, imaginative style that makes easy reading, he keeps stopping the story, sometimes at an exasperating moment, for long digressions on ships, rigging, cannon, discipline, officers, and men. To many readers this rich lode of eighteenth century sea lore will be as engrossing as the devious windings of the tale itself. The aston-

ishing thing is how, out of the melange of sails, broadsides, romance, and digression, there comes a very solid sense of that intangible thing called character, the character of O'Corboy and the navy he served. Very sensibly, Mr. Daly has tempered this vigorous yarn with just the proper minimum of feminine charm, enough to captivate the O'Corboy without keeping him from the sea. It is a satisfying yarn, long, various, and exciting.

N. L. R.

**FALSE WITNESS.** By Irving Stone. Doubleday, Doran. 1940. 275 pp. \$2.

Irving Stone, who wrote "Lust for Life" and "Sailor on Horseback," has turned from dramatized biography to try his hand at a sermon in the form of a novel. "False Witness" takes as its text the Ninth Commandment—"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor"—and Mr. Stone labors earnestly to demonstrate how destructive a few unneighborly fabrications could be to the peace and quiet of a California community back in 1903.

The trouble all started when the old Widow Smithers announced that someone had stolen fifty dollars from the bottom of her flour barrel. Before that, Mission Valley had been a place of sweetness, light, and toothsome church suppers. John Annister, who founded the town, had seen to it that the men got along together in a spirit of harmony and love and that the womenfolk, when they had to talk, told one another the stories they had been reading, instead of engaging in idle tattle. But when it was learned that poor Mary Shoemaker had baked a cake for the Widow Smithers on that day when her banknotes were sifted out of the flour, the pent-up parishioners of Mission Valley abandoned themselves to uproar and tongue-wagging, accusation and counter-accusation. In recounting the struggle that ensued between Hauser and John Annister and Annister's daughter Margaret, Mr. Stone makes fifty dollars go a long way. "False Witness" has its virtues, but they are more moral than literary.

J. S. M.

**RUN OF THE STARS.** By Dora Aydelotte. Appleton-Century. 1940. 340 pp. \$2.

Dora Aydelotte knows the pioneer period of this country and she writes about it with vividness and feeling. "Run of the Stars" takes northeastern Texas as its setting. It is the story of Sela Burchard from the day in 1889 when she joined her family in the Domain of Dinwiddie until, several years later when the Supreme Court decided that Dinwiddie County was part of the Oklahoma territory. Sela's personal history is simple enough. Disregarding her more eligible suitors, she marries Clint Aragon, a "nester"

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